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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Tuesday 1 November 2016

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Mardi 1^{er} novembre 2016

Standing Committee on
Government Agencies

Intended appointments

Comité permanent des
organismes gouvernementaux

Nominations prévues



Chair: Cristina Martins
Clerk: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Présidente : Cristina Martins
Greffière : Sylwia Przezdziecki

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Tuesday 1 November 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
ORGANISMES GOUVERNEMENTAUXMardi 1^{er} novembre 2016*The committee met at 0901 in committee room 2.*

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Good morning, committee members. Welcome to another fun-filled day on the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

Before we move ahead with our various appointments today, we have the adoption of a subcommittee report and our intended appointments review. Our first order of business is to consider a subcommittee report dated October 27, 2016. Would someone please move the adoption of this report? Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I move the adoption of the subcommittee report on intended appointees dated Thursday, October 27, 2016.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Is there any discussion, members? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you, members.

INTENDED APPOINTMENTS

MS. MONICA PURDY

Review of intended appointment, selected by official opposition party and third party: Monica Purdy, intended appointee as member, Licence Appeal Tribunal.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): We now move to the appointment review. We have Monica Purdy, intended appointee, to hear from now. Ms. Purdy, please come forward. Welcome.

Ms. Monica Purdy: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Thank you very much for being here today. You may begin with a very brief statement, if you wish. Members of each party will then have 10 minutes to ask you some questions. Any time used for your statement will be deducted from the government's time for questions. Please begin by stating your name.

Ms. Monica Purdy: My name is Monica Purdy.

The Vice-Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile): Begin any time.

Ms. Monica Purdy: Thank you, Madam Chair. Good morning. Good morning, members of the standing committee.

As an appointee to the Licence Appeal Tribunal, I bring a strong work ethic, demonstrated decision-making

and deep respect for civil duty. These qualities that I bring to LAT, should I be appointed, have been central to the success that I have achieved in my 32 years of working.

After completing a two-year diploma course, I graduated from Niagara College and began working as a registered nurse. I did not stop there. I continued to work and attended school part-time, first earning an undergraduate degree, then a master's in nursing. With my increasing education, my knowledge and work experience in health care expanded to include jobs in nursing management, informatics and teaching.

Approximately 10 years ago, after many years in health care, I was offered the opportunity to serve as a member of the Social Benefits Tribunal, or the SBT, making this my second time addressing this committee. My tenure at the Social Benefits Tribunal, or SBT, was greatly rewarding, due largely to the importance of the work that the tribunal does in the area of social justice. My work at SBT allowed me to apply and sharpen my skills both as an adjudicator and as a high-functioning member. My timeline for releasing decisions, attendance, presiding skills, expanded knowledge and skill acquisition of the adjudicator role are indicators of my success over the last 10 years.

My interest in being an adjudicator for LAT is based on my experience working in a high-volume tribunal dealing with health and disability issues. My background in health care management and adjudication, managing individuals, programs and projects in a complex, changing environment also prepares me to work on the board.

As you may know, LAT is a constituent tribunal under the Safety, Licensing Appeals and Standards Tribunals Ontario, SLASTO. This cluster of tribunals operates under as many as 30 different statutes that deal primarily with safety and public protection. They hear and resolve disputes arising from insurance claims, compensation, safety, licensing, policing, fire safety and animal care, to name a few.

I believe that my skills as an adjudicator, communicator and negotiator will be beneficial to the adjudicator position at LAT. I have continued my education and have completed certificates in alternate dispute resolution and in paralegal studies, and I am now licensed with the Law Society of Upper Canada in that capacity. My educational pursuits have exposed me to working with the variety of legislation that SLASTO deals with on a regular basis.

In addition to that, I have reviewed the tribunal's mandate and past decisions to gain more insight into the process at LAT. To that end, I am confident that my academic life and overall experience qualify me to be a LAT member.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Ms. Purdy. We are now going to begin questioning with the third party. Miss Taylor, please?

Miss Monique Taylor: Good morning, Ms. Purdy. Thank you for joining us here today. I have a few questions for you, starting with: Between 2014 and 2015, you contributed nearly \$600 to the Liberal Party of Ontario, and in 2003, you ran as a candidate for the party in the riding of Beaches-East York. Is that correct?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Correct.

Miss Monique Taylor: Okay. Just checking, because you had an odd look on your face. I wanted to make sure I didn't have the wrong person.

Part of your role on the Licence Appeal Tribunal will be to act as an impartial and non-partisan judge of facts that are put in front of you. Given your past donation records and your affiliation with the Liberal Party of Ontario, are you now prepared to ensure that all of your actions as a member of the board not only appear to be but also are fully non-partisan?

Ms. Monica Purdy: I pride myself on being impartial in my decision-making and my writing. After having worked at the Social Benefits Tribunal for 10 years, I have written many decisions which are fair and transparent. In most cases, what we see are self-represented clients. Bearing in mind that those people who are self-represented have little knowledge of the legislation, I try to ensure that my writing is clear, that the decision is fair and that it's based on facts and the evidence before me.

Miss Monique Taylor: In a non-partisan role, there are several aspects of the position that could bring partisanship into it. There's possible legislation; there are all kinds of things that move through here quickly. We see very clearly that many members who are nominated to positions are past donors or past candidates, always affiliated with the Liberal party. So you'll have to excuse me, but it is my role as the third party in opposition to bring these things to light when you're appointed to a position. How do you feel that your previous affiliation will not affect your role in this manner?

Ms. Monica Purdy: As I've stated before, my decisions are impartial, and I pride myself on the ability to write fair and transparent decisions, and I conduct myself in that manner.

Miss Monique Taylor: Okay. Is there any specific contribution that you're hoping to bring to the tribunal in a different way?

0910

Ms. Monica Purdy: I believe that my background in health and my ability to review and quickly read health information is a benefit that I bring. Also, based on my record at the Social Benefits Tribunal, where I maintained a lower-than-average adjournment record; writing and releasing decisions; my ability to work with self-

represented clients as well as dealing with interpreters; managing hearings that are sometimes of the simplest matter to more complex: I bring all of that experience with me to LAT. I think it will be of benefit to the tribunal.

Miss Monique Taylor: So was there a specific reason why you chose the Licence Appeal Tribunal?

Ms. Monica Purdy: I actually applied to a number of different tribunals that I thought my experience would have prepared me for. LAT was one of many tribunals that I applied to.

Miss Monique Taylor: In 2016, the Licence Appeal Tribunal will start hearing appeals regarding the sale of beer in grocery stores, as well as appeals related to the horse racing industry and their licences. Do you see any particular challenges arising as a result of this?

Ms. Monica Purdy: None that I can see.

Miss Monique Taylor: Do you have any thoughts on how you would participate in those conversations when it comes to the sale of beer in grocery stores?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Not specifically. I imagine that the Licence Appeal Tribunal has an extensive training program. They give you training around the legislation and managing certain issues. With that in mind, I believe that I'll be able to make those types of decisions and have those discussions at that time.

Miss Monique Taylor: So your previous experience in the social appeal tribunal—

Ms. Monica Purdy: Social Benefits Tribunal.

Miss Monique Taylor: Social benefits—right. How do you feel that that will impact on decisions such as beer in the grocery stores? Maybe just thinking of where you come from and seeing how things will be moving into the future.

Ms. Monica Purdy: Resolving disputes, I think, in general is what I bring to the tribunal. I'm able to listen to what the parties bring to the table. I'm able to review the evidence against the legislation and make the proper decision.

Miss Monique Taylor: Have you been given any information, or are you knowledgeable about the time commitment that this position will take?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Yes.

Miss Monique Taylor: And are you confident you can keep that?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Absolutely.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you. That's everything from me.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Miss Taylor. We're now going to turn it over to the government side. Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Good morning. Thank you very much for being here today.

There has been some mention by the third party about being partisan or being non-partisan, yet I look at your background here and I see some non-partisan activities, such as your involvement in the Cabbagetown Regent Park museum and the North York Storm girls hockey

team as a parent volunteer. These are clearly non-partisan types of activities, are they not?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Oh, they are, definitely. I've also participated in the Toronto International Film Festival as a volunteer over the last three to four years. Much of my community involvement has been fairly non-partisan.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: So you're confident that you can serve on this tribunal and be very objective?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Yes.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you. I look at your resumé and I see that clearly reflected.

Why did this position interest you?

Ms. Monica Purdy: It interests me primarily because of the new legislation that has been added to LAT that I thought was similar to the tribunal that I have experience on, the Social Benefits Tribunal. They're both high-functioning tribunals. They deal with disputes that are primarily of a health nature. As you know, LAT, as recently as May, added the automobile accident benefits schedule to their portfolio as well. So those are my reasons.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Can I get you to speak more about any particular goals that you might have if serving on this tribunal?

Ms. Monica Purdy: I look forward to contributing the experience that I've gained as an adjudicator in the last 10 years. I look forward to contributing my background in health care and being able to deal with disputes of a health and benefits nature, as well as working with self-represented parties and being of service in that way.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I thank you very much for stepping forward and considering this public service to the province. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Ms. Vernile. We're now going to pass the questioning on to the official opposition. Mister—Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Good morning.

Ms. Monica Purdy: Good morning.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: A little confusion over here. I thought we were—but anyway. I guess we have your political affiliation out of the way, so I won't ask that question.

We had a number of homeowners appeal decisions made by Tarion to the tribunal. Based on their experiences, I believe that the tribunal is broken and suffers from serious process issues. How do you respond to these concerns, and what action do you plan to take to address these issues?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Because I'm not part of the tribunal currently, I'm really not privy to the challenges they may be facing in that regard. I do know that overall, in general, tribunals are clustering together in order to share resources, in order to be more accessible and maintain accountability. I would think that SLASTO, being a cluster of tribunals, is working to manage all of those challenges.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Do you know anything about Tarion? Do you know what Tarion is?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Not off the top of my head, no.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. It's something that you're probably going to get involved with sooner rather than later, I would think, so I would study up on it if I were you.

Ms. Monica Purdy: Likely. I do know the term. I just—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: What's that?

Ms. Monica Purdy: I do know the term "Tarion," and I know it's involved in home ownership, but I'm not all that knowledgeable.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a warranty company; that's what it is.

Ms. Monica Purdy: Yes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You seem to have a great knowledge of the health care system, and I'm sure from your work on the Social Benefits Tribunal that you have a solid understanding of social assistance. However, much of what is dealt with at the Licence Appeal Tribunal involves issues like liquor licences, home warranty claims—Tarion—and drivers' licences. Is there anything in your previous experience that will prepare you for these types of hearings?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Well, I believe that my ability to manage hearings—listening to both parties and opposite views, being able to make a decision relying on the facts of the matter and applying the legislation in a fair and transparent way—yes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. But you've had no experience with this type of thing.

Ms. Monica Purdy: With what type of—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: With liquor licences, home warranty claims and that type of business.

Ms. Monica Purdy: No.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: No.

Ms. Monica Purdy: No direct experience with those.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: So I guess we get down to—since you don't have much knowledge of—and I'm not criticizing you; I think that's just a fact.

Preparation: How will you prepare for something like this? It's only fair to have anybody who's dealing with these types of things to have someone who knows somewhat of what they're talking about.

Ms. Monica Purdy: The Licence Appeal Tribunal is unique in that it has jurisdiction over 25 different legislations, and then there were the two that were added as recently as April 2016, the Insurance Act as well as the beer and liquor stores. I do have some knowledge in that. When I took the paralegal course, those were all the legislations that were covered in that course and that was something that I've been tested on. I have no actual working experience with those particular legislations, but I do have the knowledge and the experience of working at other tribunals that I feel I can transfer over into the hearings that LAT would be hearing.

0920

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: What did you take in your paralegal course? Was some of this covered in that, did you say?

Ms. Monica Purdy: Oh, yes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Was it? Okay. How long ago was that?

Ms. Monica Purdy: That was about four to five years ago. It's fairly recent.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. That's all.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Cho? No questions?

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: No.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Good.

Thank you very much. I am going to ask you to step down right now. We will consider the concurrences following all of the interviews.

Ms. Monica Purdy: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much.

MS. BARBARA HICKS

Review of intended appointment, selected by third party: Barbara Hicks, intended appointee as member, Animal Care Review Board, Fire Safety Commission and Licence Appeal Tribunal.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Our next intended appointee today is Barbara Hicks, who has been nominated as member, Animal Care Review Board, Fire Safety Commission and Licence Appeal Tribunal.

Please come forward and take a seat at the table. Welcome, Ms. Hicks. Thank you very much for being here today. You may begin with a brief statement, if you wish. Members of each party will then have 10 minutes to ask you questions. Any time used for your statement will be deducted from the government's time for questions. Once we get to that time, the questions will begin with the government side.

Welcome, Ms. Hicks. You may begin.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Thank you very much. Good morning, everyone. I'm pleased to have this opportunity to tell you about myself and my qualifications for appointment. I believe that I'm well qualified and well suited for the role of adjudicator.

I live in Hanover, which is located on the south end of Grey county on the border of Bruce county. I was born and raised in Hanover, although I left for many years to pursue my education and to work. I did return to make Hanover my home again about 12 years ago. I bring the small-town, rural Ontario experience with me to the role of adjudicator. I believe that perspective is not currently well represented on the panels to which I'm being appointed.

I am very involved in my community. In fact, in March of this year, I was recognized as the 2015 Citizen of the Year for the town of Hanover. I'm very proud of that achievement. It's in recognition of the many volunteer commitments that I've made over the years. I served for five years as a trustee on the Hanover Public Library board. I served for about eight years on the chamber of commerce. I've been serving on the Hanover and District Hospital board for about six years now, and

I'm currently the past chair. I have taken on leadership roles in those community organizations.

In my day-to-day work, I practise law with my husband and two other lawyers. We have an office in Hanover and an office in Walkerton, which is about 10 minutes away. I currently practise mostly in the areas of wills and estates, real estate and business law. My clients are from every walk of life, including seniors, business owners, farmers, stay-at-home parents and professionals.

Working with such a diverse client group requires good communication skills, particularly being able to express complex concepts in simple language. I feel especially lucky that I attended law school at the time when lawyers were being trained to use plain language, and I've certainly adopted that in my practice.

I attended the University of Windsor, and their special focus is on access to justice. I therefore have a big appreciation for SLASTO's mandate to provide services in a fair, consistent, effective and accessible manner.

Just prior to law school and during the first year of law school, I worked at the Windsor border as a customs officer. In that role, I was responsible for applying dozens of statutes, conducting investigations, writing reports and meeting agency targets. I interacted with a very diverse group of people, some with language barriers or mental health or addictions problems, and this required a great deal of sensitivity and empathy on my part.

Prior to attending law school, I lived and worked in Toronto. I obtained an honours bachelor's degree in social work. The program that I attended incorporated a supervised work program with placement opportunities, and I had the opportunities there to work with a variety of populations, including troubled kids in Scarborough, inmates and their families at the Metro East Detention Centre and critically ill patients at Centenary Hospital.

Upon graduation, I took a job with the Toronto Board of Education, working with high school students with learning disabilities.

All of these experiences have helped me to understand and appreciate some of the challenges that people face. I obtained my master's in law at the University of Cambridge in England in 2004. This gave me the chance to interact with students from around the world. The program was very rigorous. As a result, I was able to sharpen my writing and research skills.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Ms. Hicks. We are now going to begin the questioning with the government side. Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Good morning, Barbara.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Good morning.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It's good to see you here today. Thank you for making the trip from Hanover. Did you drive in?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Yes, I drove in last night.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Okay. How was your drive?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: It was great. Thank you.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It's better than trying to face it first thing in the morning, right?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: For sure.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you very much for stepping forward and wanting to serve the province of Ontario. You've stated some of the reasons why you're interested in serving as an adjudicator. What in your background do you think will inform you as you tackle this position?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: I think the diverse work experiences that I've had will help me to appreciate some of the challenges that people will be facing on the various tribunals that I'll be dealing with. I have a very active way of listening so that I can understand what's being said, but also what's not being said. It helps me to deepen the level of communication.

I listen well and I always try to be impartial and try to be respectful of different points of view, but I'm careful to follow guidelines or rules that are in place to ensure that people have fair access to justice, and that things are well explained and understood by them.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Do you have any particular objectives that you hope to accomplish if serving as an adjudicator?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: No, I don't. I'm just interested in an opportunity to broaden my skills and experiences.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Just out of curiosity, with your background, having studied in England, having lived in Toronto and elsewhere, why go back to Hanover?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Actually, it was my husband's decision. I met my husband in Toronto, and I was taking him home to visit my family for special holidays and vacation time. He really fell in love with the town. He's currently the deputy mayor of Hanover, actually.

It's a great place to raise children. We have four children. It's safe, and we just really enjoy the atmosphere and the lifestyle that you have in a small community.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I know Hanover well. I'm sure they are very well served by having both you and your husband there, and your family. Thank you very much for your comments today.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much, Ms. Vernile. We're going to flip it over here to the official opposition. Mr. Pettapiece.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Good morning.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Good morning.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You do live in a great part of the country. I represent the riding just south of that, actually, where Clifford is, if you know where Clifford is.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Yes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My riding and Lisa Thompson's riding and Bill Walker's riding all meet in Clifford. That's where it is, so I know that country well.

I have some questions to do especially with the Animal Care Review Board part of this. Farming is certainly a big part of where you're from and where you live.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: That's right.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: There are very big cattle sales up there in tri-county. You're surrounded by chickens and certainly other things.

I'm going to ask you if you're familiar with these terms, because I think it's important to the Animal Care Review Board. A downer cow: Do you know what that is?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Vaguely. I understand it's a cow that's not well and may be close to death.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Well, they can be, yes. If it's a downer, they're down. That's actually why they call them "downer cows."

Laughter.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: No, really. Farmers are simple folk.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: No, they're not. They're running businesses.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Anyway, ruptured pigs. Do you know about ruptured hogs?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: I'm sorry—ruptured?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Ruptured hogs.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: No. No, I don't.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Spent hens?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: No.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The reason I'm asking you these questions is because we've had issues where I'm from, in my riding, where farmers have been practising what they thought were normal farm practices, had done it for years—I certainly did—and then all of a sudden they're not doing normal farm practices and they get fined very heavily. It has caused a number of hardships, and it hasn't just happened in my riding; it's happening throughout Ontario.

I think it's important that anybody who is on this board be familiar with these types of terms. A spent hen is a hen that's—she's done.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Okay, right.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: She's spent.

0930

Anyway, the other thing that interests me about this is the fire safety business. I'm going to be presenting a bill on fire safety. How familiar are you with the Fire Protection and Prevention Act?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: I am somewhat familiar with it. My interest in the fire safety committee mostly comes from the fact that my oldest son decided about two years ago that he was going to pursue a career as a firefighter, so I really turned my attention to learning about the career and what the educational requirements, work opportunities and things like that were.

I'm somewhat familiar with that legislation. As a business owner in Hanover, I'm inspected annually by the local fire inspector. I'm certainly familiar with clients who have been inspected or have had issues raised on inspection.

It's something I'm naturally interested in. I know I have some learning to do, but I'm excited to be able to learn about that.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I believe Hanover has actually looked at my proposed bill. Maybe your husband—I believe he's the deputy mayor, is he?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: That's right.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Yes. He might know about this bill I'm proposing. What it does is to put an identification on some buildings with a certain type of construction. We had a couple firefighters killed in Listowel a few years ago when a roof collapsed on them, and that's what this has to deal with.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Okay. Right.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You also have a racetrack in town.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Yes, we do.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The Hanover Raceway, a very nice place. I enjoy going there.

You were on the chamber of commerce at one time. I imagine you still belong to it?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: I still am, yes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: In dollar value, what does that track mean to your town?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Oh, it's tremendously valuable. The industry has changed quite a bit in the last five years, I suppose, with changes that have happened. I know that the industry isn't what it used to be. It used to provide many, many jobs and spinoff jobs related to the horse racing business, but because of the racetrack being present in Hanover, we are able to have a slots location, and the slots generate a huge amount of revenue for the town of Hanover every year. I think it's in the neighbourhood of a million dollars.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Is that right? Because you might be involved with the racetrack, too, with the Animal Care Review Board. Horse owners and anybody who looks after animals and is successful treats their animals in a great way. That's just the way it works. You can't treat animals poorly and expect to make a living.

I just thought I'd ask about the racetrack to see if you were familiar with that business and what it does for the town.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Yes, I am.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It actually does quite a bit, as most racetracks do.

Have you ever appeared before any of these boards in your legal career?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: No.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: What experience would you have with a public appeals tribunal? Do you have any experience with that?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: No.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You and your husband have your own law firm.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Yes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: So I would expect that you would be somewhat busy with that type of thing. I guess the question should be asked: How do you think you're going to be able to handle this plus that?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Right. Well, I have applied to be appointed on a part-time basis, and my understanding is that will be two, or potentially three, days a week of my time. I did hire a new lawyer recently to help pick up my load if I'm taken away with tribunal work, but I am excellent at managing my time and I am accustomed to working very hard. I expect I'll be able to manage.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Okay. Thanks, Chair.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you, Mr. Pettapiece. I would imagine that as a mother of four children, you are very good at time management.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Yes, I am.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): We are now going to pass the questioning on to Miss Taylor.

Miss Monique Taylor: Good morning.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Good morning.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you for being here with us today. Thank you for applying to different tribunals. I believe you've applied to a few different ones.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Yes. I'm being potentially cross-appointed to three of them.

Miss Monique Taylor: We see a trend, as you've heard with the previous person up for appointment. You, again, are a contributor to the Liberal party. Your husband ran for the Liberals in 2011. As your part on taking a position in a non-partisan role, how do you feel that you will be able to do that job?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: I don't have any concerns about my ability to be non-partisan. I give a total of \$10 a month to the Liberal Party by way of automatic withdrawal from my account. It's really trivial amounts.

My husband is more political than I am. I've never sought public office. I enjoy politics. I enjoy observing and watching, especially what's going on south of the border at the moment. But I'm not a political person myself. My husband has really turned his focus to municipal politics. He did run in 2011. However, he's now really deeply involved with municipal politics.

Miss Monique Taylor: You may want to reconsider that \$10 a month, seeing that you will now be in a non-partisan position. It may not be a good place to be—just my thoughts.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Okay.

Miss Monique Taylor: As a member of the Animal Care Review Board, you will hear from individuals who have had their pets seized from them. Currently, in this province, some breeds of dogs are essentially illegal to own and can therefore be removed from their owners with little or no notice. What is your opinion of the so-called specific-breed legislation in Ontario?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Right. I don't know specifically which breeds are illegal, but I think that the intention is to try to increase public safety. I'm sure that there must be evidence to support those particular breeds being banned. They must pose a threat, I presume.

Pets are very important to people, and especially to families, and I think that any decision to remove a pet or an animal from someone is not to be taken lightly. Pets can play a very therapeutic role in someone's life. I think it's a matter of balancing people's interest in having pets along with ensuring public safety.

Miss Monique Taylor: I think it's more of an owner-specific problem than it probably is a pet-specific problem. I hope that you will look at this legislation. It's pit bulls that are in question. There are many loving dogs of all breeds, and it's how you train those dogs in how

they behave, so I hope that you would look at that, moving forward in the future, because it's owners that we should be looking at and not specific breeds.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Okay.

Miss Monique Taylor: According to the application you submitted to the Public Appointments Secretariat, your law practice focuses on corporate/commercial law, estate planning, estate administration, estate litigation and real estate. With that in mind, what specifically led you to apply for these particular positions?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: I was just interested in an opportunity to broaden my skills and learn some new things. I've been in private practice now for about 12 years and I felt that I was ready for something new. I am a big believer in lifelong learning, and I see this as an opportunity for me to learn and expand my skill set. I think that my experiences as a lawyer feed in nicely to many of the issues that will come before me as an adjudicator.

Miss Monique Taylor: What do you believe are the major challenges to be faced by the SLASTO cluster in the foreseeable future, as the organization as a whole? What is your outlook on that? What do you see?

Ms. Barbara Hicks: I think there are maybe some challenges going on because it's still fairly new and there will be some issues to sort out. Change is always difficult. I think already there have been some improvements, especially to the timelines within which some matters are dealt with. But I think it's going to be a matter of paying attention to benchmarks and whether certain targets are being met and if improvements can be made in those areas.

Miss Monique Taylor: Just once again, the \$10 a month: You're being appointed to a board and you're being appointed by the government that you're giving \$10 a month to. It could be seen as a really bad position. Just for your own self, you should probably look at that and reconsider.

Ms. Barbara Hicks: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Thank you very much, Miss Taylor.

That concludes the time allocated for this interview. Thank you very much, Ms. Hicks. You may step down.

We will now consider the concurrence for Ms. Monica Purdy, nominated as member, Licence Appeal Tribunal (Safety, Licensing Appeals and Standards Tribunals Ontario). Would someone please move the concurrence? Mr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Monica Purdy, nominated as member, Licence Appeal Tribunal (Safety, Licensing Appeals and Standards Tribunals Ontario).

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. Congratulations, Ms. Purdy. Sorry, I should go back and just ask: Was there any discussion with the appointee? No? Okay. All in favour, once again? Opposed? The motion is carried. Thank you very much.

We will now consider the concurrence for Ms. Barbara Hicks, nominated as member, Animal Care Review Board, Fire Safety Commission and Licence Appeal Tribunal (Safety, Licensing Appeals and Standards Tribunals Ontario). Would someone please move the concurrence? Mr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I move concurrence in the intended appointment of Barbara Hicks, nominated as member, Animal Care Review Board, Fire Safety Commission and Licence Appeal Tribunal (Safety, Licensing Appeals and Standards Tribunals Ontario).

The Chair (Mrs. Cristina Martins): Any discussion? All in favour? Opposed? The motion is carried. Congratulations, Ms. Hicks.

Seeing that there are no more nominees and our business is done here today, the committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 0942.

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